

Washington, D.C. – Among hundreds of children, parents, nurses and concerned citizens, Congressman Joe Sestak (PA-07) opened CureSearch's "Rally to Reach the Day." The Congressman announced the establishment of a new House Pediatric Cancer Caucus and, as someone who shared the experiences of many attending the event, expressed his hopes for the future of pediatric cancer research and treatment.

"Tragically, cancer is the leading cause of death by disease in children and, although long term survival rates are fairly high, three out of five children suffer from long term side effects," said the Congressman.

As the parent of a child diagnosed with cancer, the Congressman spoke about the heart-wrenching, emotional experiences that every one of the more than 14,000 families with a child with cancer endures. He also noted that each day, 46 children—more than two classrooms of kids—will be diagnosed with cancer. His daughter's experience and his concern about healthcare in general were, in fact, the main catalysts for his decision to run for Congress.

"I firmly believe that it is only through the collaboration of the government, private organizations like CureSearch, doctors, and the families affected by this devastating illness that we can come closer to finding a cure," said the Congressman. "The establishment of the House Pediatric Cancer Caucus is a significant step forward that will give voices to thousands of sick children and represent the struggles of every family battling the disease."

The mission of the Pediatric Cancer Caucus, which Congressman Sestak will co-chair, is to serve as a clearinghouse for information on pediatric cancer and a bipartisan forum to aid members of Congress in working together to address pediatric cancer. Its goals include increasing funding for pediatric cancer research, encouraging the collaboration between the public sector and private research organizations and supporting the training of skilled pediatric cancer specialists. As the first initiative of the caucus, the Congressman is introducing a House resolution commemorating Pediatric Cancer Awareness Day in September.

CureSearch is a National Childhood Cancer Foundation which works to raise private funds for pediatric cancer research for the Children's Oncology Group, the world's largest cooperative cancer research organization. Within the network of the organizations are more than 5,000 physicians, nurses and scientists. The "Rally to Reach the Day" is an event that draws Congressional speakers to help raise awareness about pediatric cancer.

The Congressman, who has been devoted to cancer patients since he was elected, was recently honored with an award from the Linda Creed Breast Cancer Foundation. The Actions, Commitment and Efforts (ACE) Award is the first of its kind and was given to the Congressman as recognition of his ongoing support for breast cancer patients.

Born and raised in Delaware County, former 3-star Admiral Joe Sestak served in the Navy for 31 years and now serves as the Representative from the 7th District of Pennsylvania. He led a series of operational commands at sea, including as Commander of an aircraft carrier battle group of 30 U.S. and allied ships with over 15,000 sailors and 100 aircraft that conducted operations in Afghanistan and Iraq. After 9/11, Joe was the first Director of “Deep Blue,” the Navy’s anti-terrorism unit that established strategic and operations policies for the “Global War on Terrorism.” He served as President Clinton’s Director for Defense Policy at the National Security Council in the White House, and holds a Ph.D. in Political Economy and Government from Harvard University. According to the office of the House Historian, Joe is the highest-ranking former military officer ever elected to the U.S. Congress.